



November 2011



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Town Manager
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Storm Debris Collection Brush Drop off

November 25, 26, 27
Open 8 AM to 4 PM

Residents may drop off
loose branches and logs
not exceeding 4 feet in
length. No bags accepted.

Forge Village Ball Field
(on West Prescott St)

Abbot School Parking Lot
(on Depot St)



Senior Holiday Luncheon
Franco American Club
Tuesday December 6
11 AM, Cost \$7.00
Pre-registration Call:
978-692-5523

Cameron Senior Center
Lasagna Supper
December 14
See Page 3 for Details



Flu Make Up Clinic
December 8, 9
See page 5



Annual Town Meeting
Warrant opens
December 15

Watch Meetings Online

westford
CAT

www.westfordcat.org

Dear Westford Residents,

The damage caused by the early-season snowstorm of October 29th stunned many of us, and also left many of our residents without power for up to six days. Although our town staff prepared in advance for this storm with extra staffing, specialized equipment, and shelter operations on stand-by, we are reliant upon National Grid to remove trees from power lines and restore our power. This storm, along with Hurricane Irene, caused a significant number of trees and limbs to fall upon power lines. Fifteen streets remained closed after five days, and school was cancelled for four days, as electrical wires were down all over town.

As we do after every storm, our town staff meets to discuss what worked well, and where improvements may be made. The police department created a [Facebook](#) page to improve communication, and this year we established a website survey to allow residents to comment and make suggestions. Communication is vital during these extreme storms, and we plan to create an AM/FM radio station to assist us in the future.

The Board of Selectmen met with representatives from National Grid at their November 8th meeting, and discussed our frustration with repeated power outages and lengthy restoration periods. Our town's Energy Committee has agreed to lead the charge to investigate what measures may be taken to prevent future long-term power outages, and also to investigate the possibility of switching electricity providers. Stay tuned for more information on our website: www.westfordma.gov.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all of our town staff who helped to prepare for and

respond to this storm: Joe Targ and Tim Whitcomb, Emergency Management Directors, Police Chief Tom McEnaney and the entire police and dispatch department, Fire Chief Rich Rochon and the fire and ambulance staff, Highway Superintendent Chip Barrett and the entire highway staff, Sandy Collins, her staff, and all of the Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps volunteers, our school staff who operated the shelter, Joanne Sheehan, Judy Ramirez, and the staff and volunteers at the Cameron Senior Center, Ellen Rainville, and the library staff, John



Town officials meeting with National Grid representative

Mangiaratti, Assistant Town Manager, and Tina Landry, my administrative assistant, who answered many resident calls, Chris Coutu, GIS Coordinator who created real-time maps to help with storm response and recovery, Kevin Murphy, Tom LaFlamme and the IT department who helped keep the town's Information Technology services up and running, Electrical Inspector Dennis Kane who worked tirelessly inspecting damaged homes, the engineering department who helped inventory the storm's damage for potential FEMA/MEMA reimbursement, and all the other town employees who helped to prepare for and manage this significant event. The highway staff continues to work to dispose of debris that fell as a result of this significant storm. These continued storms are expensive and disruptive, and are creating a noteworthy drain on our town resources. Let us hope for a mild winter.

(Continued on page 2)



(Continued from page 1)

Thank you to Terry Stader, our Veteran's Agent, for planning and organizing our town-wide Veterans Day memorial events. These services were thoughtful and poignant, and well-attended by Westford residents desiring to show their thanks and great respect for our veterans.

Our fall Special Town Meeting was held on Monday, October 17, 2011 with 265 registered voters in attendance. The official town meeting actions are available at this link: [STM Results](#).

The FY2012 budget articles all were approved, however the town voted to not approve **Article 4**, the Citizen's Petition seeking to acquire the property at 57 Main Street for general municipal services. The town overwhelmingly approved **Article 8**, which asked the town to enter a Tax Increment Financing Agreement with Red Hat, Inc., an open source software company whose research and development headquarters is located in Tech Park West. They were seeking approval of this agreement to enable them to construct a 100,000 sq. ft. addition and create 181 new computer engineering and other positions.

The town approved **Article 11**, which amended the definitions of "Pond" and "Freshwater Wetlands" to exempt active quarry pits and storm water control basins from the definitions, and make the local bylaw consistent with the state Wetlands Protection Act Regulations.

The town approved **Article 12**, which replaced the existing Wireless Communications Facilities zoning bylaw with a more comprehensive new bylaw to regulate Radio Telecommunications Facilities, including cell towers. The article was intended to maximize the town's control over the location and design of such facilities within the limits imposed by Federal law. The new bylaw sets out a clear special permit process to be administered by the Board of Appeals.

Article 13, was approved which sought to transfer care and custody of three town-owned land-locked parcels along Vine Brook from the Tax Possession Sale Committee to the Conservation Commission.

It was a productive town meeting, and I would like to say a special thanks to all of our citizens who attended. We are now beginning the process of preparing for our annual town meeting, which will be held on March 24, 2012. The warrant will be opened by the Board of Selectmen on December 15, 2011.

Please join me in welcoming Westford's new Assistant Town Accountant, Lauri Plourde, who comes to us from the town of Bedford. Warren Razzaboni is retiring from the Highway Department after 10 years. Warren is one of those men who will drop everything to assist others. Although we wish him a long, healthy, happy retirement, he will be greatly missed on a daily basis by his co-workers and residents alike.

Happy Thanksgiving to all!

Sincerely,

Jodi Ross



Warren with celebratory cigar at the ready.



J. V. Fletcher Library News

**The Library “Widens Westford’s World” wherever you are:
at the Library, at home, on a vacation or even at work....**

Would you like to take a FREE on-line class on: *Advocacy for Elderly Parents; Aromatherapy; Basic Accounting; Career Coaching 101; Catering 101; Conflict Resolution; Dog and Cat First Aid, Care and Management; How to Start a Craft Business; Italian Cooking; Mystery Writing 101, and Spanish for Travelers*, to name just a few?



Westford library card-holders can peruse more than 500 FREE on-line non-credit Continuing Education Courses, and then enroll in up to five courses at a time. Each course has a real instructor who you can communicate with via e-mail. The courses last six months, and you can work on them any time of the day or night.

To browse through the course selection or to sign-up for classes, go the Library's website: click on “Databases” in the left-hand menu on our home page; choose *On-line Courses* from the list and then click on “Universal Class.” If you have any questions, please call Information Services at 978-399-2304.

We hope you truly enjoy these course offerings and would love any feedback on your experiences!

www.westfordlibrary.org

Cameron Senior Center News

Senior Holiday Luncheon at Franco American Club,
Tuesday, December 6 starts at 11 A.M.
Pre-registration 978 692-5523 cost \$7.

Wednesday, December 14, a Lasagna Supper for seniors at Cameron followed by a Yankee Swap with a wrapped gift under \$10 for those wanting to participate. Doors open for seniors at 4:30 PM. Pre-registration 978 692-5523.

Saturday, December 31, at Cameron a ham luncheon for seniors around noon. Doors open at 10 AM. Pre-registration 978 692-5523.



Westford Senior Center



Water Department News

Help Keep Fire Hydrants Clear:

With the last of the leaves just about to fall, it's time for a friendly reminder of the importance of keeping fire hydrants free and clear of snow. We already had an early taste of snow in October, and there is no reason to believe that we've seen that last of it. It's critical that the hydrants are cleared of snow so that they are readily visible and accessible in the event of a fire emergency. During an emergency nobody wants firefighters wasting precious time looking for a hydrant buried under the snow – or having to clear away the snow to use it. With more than 1,000 hydrants in town the Water Department needs your help keeping them clear after a snowstorm. If there is a hydrant in front of your house – and you are physically able – please take the time to clear an area several feet around the hydrant.



In addition to helping us keep the hydrants clear – please don't make our jobs more difficult by shoveling or plowing snow onto a hydrant when clearing your property. It's important to note that: ***In accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 148 Section 27B: it is unlawful to pile, push, or plow snow or ice on or against any fire hydrant in public or private way.***

We truly appreciate your help!

Residential Water Meter Replacement Program

Water meters need to be replaced every 15 years according to accepted performance standards. When you receive a letter from the Water Department indicating the need to replace your meter, please contact the Water Department as soon as possible to schedule an appointment. Replacement of the meter takes about 30 minutes and is performed at no charge to you. With more than 500 meters to change per year your cooperation is crucial for us to get this done!



Health Department News

Our local Medical Reserve Corps unit has been busily serving the community almost non-stop for the past two months. Not only did this disaster response organization support five of our flu clinics they were also deployed for two other events below:

Prescription Drug Take-Back Event

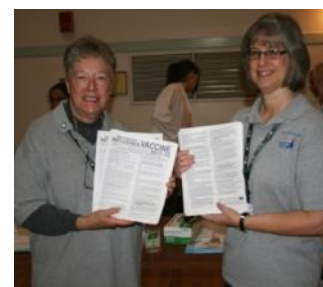
Two pharmacists from the UMV MRC were on hand for a booth at the Cameron Senior Center Harvest Fair on October 29. The booth was offered in conjunction with the Westford Health and Police Departments. This event was our town's local offering of the National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, providing a venue for those who want to dispose of unwanted and unused prescription drugs.

Representatives from the Westford Police Department and Westford Health Department join two pharmacists volunteering through the Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps at the drug take-back event (Photo on Left). Not only does this event have the potential to keep the drugs from being abused, it also keeps them out of landfills and the water supply. Residents dropped off expired medications throughout the day.



Flu Clinics

54 members supported the Health Department staff by assisting at our seasonal flu clinics. They registered and screened visitors, filling syringes, and providing inoculations to over 1500 Westford residents of all ages at 4 separate clinics.



Make Up Flu Clinics Scheduled for Westford Town Residents.

To accommodate those who might have missed our last clinic, we have scheduled two more clinic dates. These clinics are **by appointment only** and are being held at the Town Hall, 55 Main Street, 2nd floor on the following dates and times: Thursday, Dec. 8 between 2 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. or Friday, Dec. 9 between 12 noon - 1:30 p.m. Call the Westford Health Department at **978-692-5509** to sign up.

Children under age 18 must be accompanied by a parent. Please bring your health insurance information, as the town can seek reimbursement from insurance carriers. There is no charge for the flu vaccine, regardless of insurance status. Both injectable and nasal spray forms will be available at these clinics.

(Health Department News continued on next page)

Health Department News continued.

October Storm Emergency Shelter

The Cameron Senior Center provided respite by mid-afternoon on Sunday, 10/30 for those affected by the October snowstorm. By 6PM, residents were gathering at Blanchard Middle School for safe lodging and warm meals. The shelter was coordinated through several municipal departments including Emergency Management, Fire, Police, and Health, with primary staffing from the UMV MRC. Volunteers from the unit provided medical care for those with functional needs, including serious health issues that required special oversight. Other MRC members helped as needed – with set-up, registration, and other tasks to help keep the shelter up and running. The shelter remained open and staffed with volunteers through 4PM Thursday, November 3.



Members of the Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps (UMV MRC).



Westford Police, Fire, UMV MRC staff assist at check-in.



School cafeteria staff provided meals to residents.



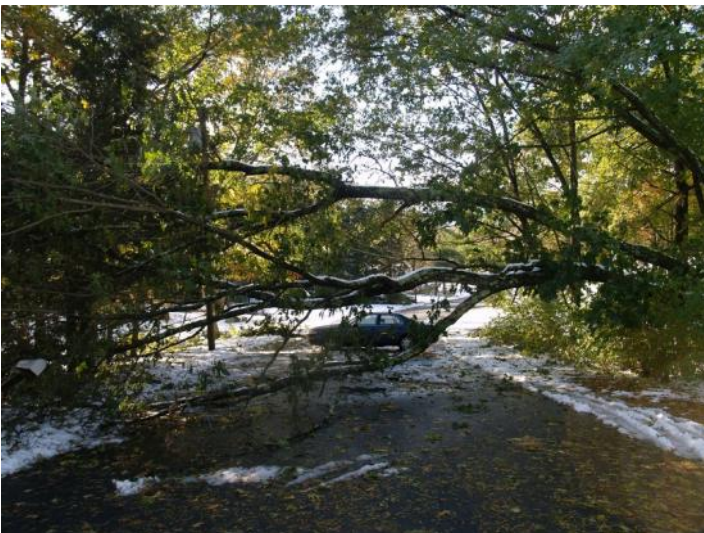
October Snow Storm



Tree across Cummings Road. Photo by Nancy Burns.



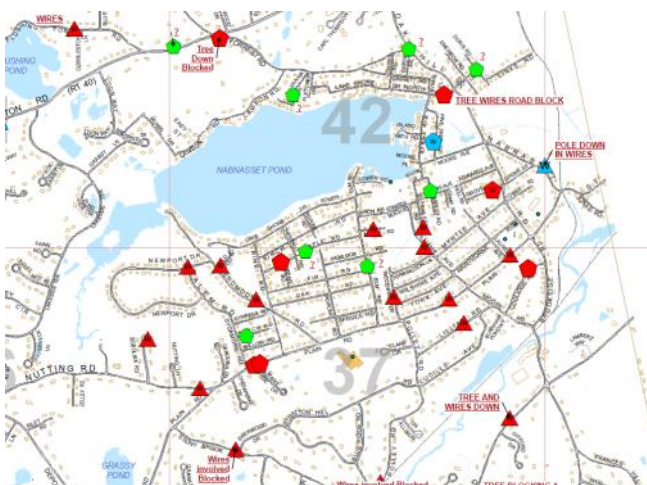
Tree across Hildreth Street. Photo by resident Im Zupkosky.



Drawbridge Road. Photo by resident Jeff Smalls.



Burning wires on Forge Village Road. Photo by C. Coutu.



Storm Response Map. Nabnasset area. Westford GIS.



Tree down on Acton Road. Photo by resident Patrick on Flickr.